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DISCUSSION

MR. PITKIN'S REFUTATION OF 'RADICAL EMPIRICISM'

ALTHOUGH Mr. Pitkin does not name me in his acute article on radical empiricism in this JOURNAL for November 22, I fear that some readers, knowing me to have applied that name to my own doctrine, may possibly consider themselves to have been in at my death.

In point of fact my withers are entirely unwrung. I have, indeed, said[1] that 'to be radical, an empiricism must not admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced.' But in my own radical empiricism this is only a *methodological postulate,* not a conclusion supposed to flow from the intrinsic absurdity of transempirical objects. I have never felt the slightest respect for the idealistic arguments which Mr. Pitkin attacks and of which Ferrier made such striking use; and I am perfectly willing to admit any number of noumenal beings or events into philosophy if only their pragmatic value can be shown.

Radical empiricism and pragmatism have so many misunderstandings to suffer from, that it seems my duty not to let this one go any farther, uncorrected.

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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

Thought and Things or Genetic Logic. A Study of the Development and Meaning of Thought. JAMES MARK BALDWIN. Vol. I. Functional Logic or Genetic Theory of Knowledge. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: The Macmillan Co. 1906. Pp. xii + 273.

The entire work of which the present volume is the first book is, in the author's words, 'an inductive psychological, genetic research into the actual movement of the function of thought.' It is an attempt 'to put a consciously genetic method through the entire structure of cognition, from the simplest to the most developed mode.'

An undertaking of this character and magnitude, if successful, can not fail to fill a most important place in that field of investigation upon which students in psychology and philosophy are at the present time focusing their attention.

Professor Baldwin's work has its unique significance in being the first attempt to make a thorough and consistent application of the genetic principle of explanation to the entire range of cognitive experience. The present volume aims to trace the genesis and development of knowledge from its germinal stage in sense experience up to the stage of distinctively logical thought. The termini of the period of development covered in this first volume are the mode of consciousness in which there are no objects, meanings or distinctions that have logical significance, and the mode of consciousness in which there exist distinctively logical objects, meanings and processes of thought.

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[1] This JOURNAL, Vol. I., p. 534.

Two distinguishable but intimately related stages fill this period of cognitive development; the prelogical stage of cognition and the stage of quasi logical cognition.

To give even a résumé of the contents of this compactly written book would exceed the limits assigned to this review, and I fear would be a greater task than the reviewer would care to essay. I shall content myself with two things: (1) a brief statement of those results from this study which are of especial significance in their bearings upon current discussions in epistemology; and (2) I shall venture some criticisms upon the structure of this book. First, as to the general outcome of this exceedingly thorough and minute genetic study of human cognition. I think whoever accepts the exposition Professor Baldwin has given of the objects, meanings and processes which make the content of cognitive experience will have to admit that the time has come for the reconstruction of the entire discipline of logic. It would seem no longer possible to exempt that science from the fate that has overtaken every science into which the conception of evolution has entered. Logical thought is no exception to those things which are subject to the law of change and growth. There is nothing in the field of logic that remains static or has absolute meaning or validity; meaning, validity, truth are relative to the concrete situations, the particular experiences in which they take their rise, and to which they are relevant. Each meaning is constituted and determined by the stage of development it occupies. And the validity of thought is for that particular mode of consciousness and that level of cognitive experience where it exists and does its work. The upholders of traditional logic will have to face the problem of saving that venerated structure from the doom that is impending, and which works of this sort seem to make inevitable. A reconstruction of logic on the basis of a genetic explanation of our *actual* knowledge seems to be manifest destiny in the light of Professor Baldwin's present work.

There are one or two particular results worked out in this study which have rather decisive bearings upon current epistemological and metaphysical doctrines; one of these is the position which Professor Baldwin has apparently well established, that the first objects which exist for our cognition are not wholly of the stuff of inner experience—the stuff ideas are made of. "The object is not as to its content exhausted by the statement of the active dispositional process which is stimulates." "There is always a sense residuum or datum." The outcome of this part of the genetic study of knowledge does not, therefore, support an idealistic epistemology; on the contrary, its implication is distinctly realistic. Another result reached by Professor Baldwin is the recognition of other interests than those which pragmatism maintains are the sole interests that determine and give validity to thought. Professor Baldwin's genetic study of knowledge makes distinctly against the pragmatist's doctrine, that 'the only sort of validity and the only criterion of truth are found in its success in meeting the demands of life.'

The significance of these two results, if they are established, is unmistakable. The claim of idealism such as Professor Royce holds to be based upon epistemology loses a strong support, and the claim of pragmatism that it alone is in harmony with our actual way of knowing is disproved, if it is established that other interests and criteria of truth than those which pragmatism recognizes have a place in the actual life of knowledge. And now comes my criticism upon this book. Greatly as I have come to appreciate the solid and fruitful character of the work done in this genetic study of knowledge, I am forced to confess that I have found this book hard reading, and that I have made my way through it only by overcoming embarrassments and hindrances that need not, I think, have been in my way. I can not think that the fault is altogether mine. I fear my experience will be substantially repeated by others who read this book. I am disposed to attribute the difficulties I have encountered in following Professor Baldwin through these pages in part to his methodology and in part, though in much less degree, to the terminology he has seen fit to employ.

The method naturally prescribed by the subject-matter, and rather distinctly indicated by the express aim of his undertaking, is not the method actually followed; and I think it was a mistake not to have followed the simpler, more direct and consistently genetic method.

Professor Baldwin distinctly announces that his work is to be a *genetic* research into the *actual movement* of the function of thought; he proposes to *follow* in his exposition this actual movement of the cognitive life. There should have been, therefore, an onward movement steadily maintained throughout the volume; each stage of cognitive development should have been so described, each achievement of thought in this stage so completely explained and appreciated, that when this stage was once left, there should be no need of returning to it as a point of departure for new movements in the exposition. In short, cognitive evolution should have been followed by its interpreter in the same strictly genetic method that the evolution itself follows.

It does not seem to me that there is anything, either in the subject-matter or in the author's avowed plan of treatment, that made it impossible or disadvantageous to maintain a single and progressive movement in his study. The method Professor Baldwin has followed necessitated his following out as many separate lines of genetic study as there are distinct matters for investigation. The consequence is that the same topics are, in part at least, rediscussed, although, of course, in different connections and with different ends in view, but nevertheless the same ground is retraversed and the genetic study starts anew with each topic; and this separation of the lines of progression makes it less easy to see that these developments are parts of one process, strands in one cord, that must be seen in their interwoven character if seen rightly. A glance at the chapters of this book is sufficient to make clear the point of my criticism; and I am reasonably confident that a careful examination of the book will sustain my judgment.

Professor Baldwin enters upon the proposed study in the third chapter, the first two chapters being an introduction which, I think, is very well done, and in Chapters III., IV., V. and VI. he gives a very good genetic exposition of cognition in its prelogical and quasi logical stages. He discusses the various objects of cognition, the processes by which they are constituted, the interests which impel this construction and the controls to which this construction is subject. He follows out the different lines of progression or advance by which cognition passes from its original to its later stages. Now, having given this psychogenetic account of knowledge, Professor Baldwin proceeds in Chapter VII. to a genetic study of meaning, and in the last two chapters in the same way he gives a genetic exposition of the great dualisms of mind and body, subject and object, with the meanings that are involved in them. The result of this method is that the entire development of knowledge is passed over three times; once in what appears to be a general survey—though the actual study is minute enough—a second time in the genetic study of meaning, and the third time in following out the development of dualisms and lesser distinctions.

Now, I can not see that anything is gained by such a methodology; on the contrary, I think this method is largely responsible for an excessive complexity of details, a lack of simplicity, directness, clearness and thorough system in the handling of the subject-matter.

The other embarrassment I have suffered in reading this book is due to the author's terminology. To be sure, he has kindly provided the reader with a sort of dictionary in one of the introductory chapters; but, even with this aid, I think Professor Baldwin's readers will justly complain of an excess of technical terms, and of terms that compel the reader to be perpetually translating the author's language into his own tongue.

I do not make these criticisms without having at the same time a very great willingness to record my fullest appreciation of a notable book, one that can not fail to add to its author's already splendid reputation, and one which will enlarge not a little our knowledge in a great field of science.

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The Unity of Will: Studies of an Irrationalist. GEORGE AINSLIE HIGHT. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1906. Pp. xii + 244.

It is a bit hard to know just how to proceed in criticizing the views of an avowed 'irrationalist.' Epistemologically there is next to nothing that can properly be opposed to one who justifies his contention of the primacy of will by intuitive evidence made manifest through 'poetic dreaming.' Those who feel the essential unity of their natures to consist